

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment for Disposal and Reuse of
Umatilla Chemical Depot, Oregon



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BRAC 05 Closure, Disposal and Reuse of Umatilla Chemical Depot, Oregon

Recommendations of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission, also known as the BRAC Commission, made on 8 September 2005, in conformity with the provisions of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Base Closure Act), Public Law (Pub. L.) 101-510, as amended, included the closure of Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD), Oregon. In the absence of Congressional disapproval, the BRAC Commission's recommendations became binding on 9 November 2005. The UMCD installation property has been determined to be surplus to Department of the Army (Army) needs. Although the BRAC Law states that closure actions normally must be completed by 15 September 2011, the BRAC Commission found that the International Chemical Weapons Convention Treaty requires completion of the chemical demilitarization mission prior to closure of UMCD, which was completed in October 2011. Chemical surety (i.e., the process of cleaning and purging all facilities and equipment of chemical agent) ended in March 2012. On 1 August 2012, UMCD was closed and transferred to inactive operational status in accordance with the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-510, as amended; and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, Pub. L. 112-81. The Army's excess real property interests at UMCD will be disposed of and transferred to new owners according to applicable laws, regulations, and national policy.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its implementing regulations, the Army has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of closing the installation and disposing of the federal fee-owned property and to consider reasonable reuse scenarios. The EA also considers the cumulative impacts of potential redevelopment and reuse of UMCD property by others. The EA has been developed in accordance with NEPA and associated implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500–1508) and the Army (32 CFR Part 651, *Environmental Analysis of Army's Actions*).

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to dispose of 9,555 acres of surplus property (Army primary action) made available by closure mandated by the BRAC Commission, and to consider subsequent reuse of installation land and infrastructure by others (secondary action). The UMCD Redevelopment Plan (UMADRA 2010) is analyzed for potential environmental impacts that are likely to result from the transition from Army ownership to other federal agencies and private ownership. This action includes caretaker operations, cleanup of contaminated sites, and interim leasing. UMCD will be disposed in accordance with the UMCD Redevelopment Plan, which includes a Wildlife Refuge zone (5,700 acres) and parcels used for industrial redevelopment, agriculture, and transportation rights-of-way. The remaining 7,500 acres of UMCD property will be transferred to the Army Guard Bureau (ARGB) for use by the Oregon Army National Guard (ORARNG) within the Military Training zone. ORARNG currently uses this property for training activities under a license issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Although the transfer of administrative control of the Military Training zone to the ORARNG is not part of the federal action subject to environmental analysis, ORARNG's use of

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the property is evaluated as part of the cumulative effects analysis within this EA. Any new construction, land management, or training activities within the Military Training zone parcel on federal government lands would be considered under separate NEPA analyses by the ORARNG or other federal agencies, as appropriate.

As a secondary action, the EA evaluates the reuse of the remaining parcels, which consists of 9,555 acres and includes the Wildlife Refuge zone and several parcels allocated for industrial purposes, agriculture, and transportation rights-of-way. The Army proposes to dispose of the UMCD property to nonfederal entities for redevelopment consistent with the UMCD Redevelopment Plan (i.e., industrial, commercial, transportation, buffer conservation areas, and other uses). The Wildlife Refuge zone has been set aside for conservation purposes and limited economic development in the UMCD Redevelopment Plan. The CDA would likely select a local land trust to manage the Wildlife Refuge zone for conservation purposes.

Alternatives Considered

For the primary action of property disposal, the following alternatives were evaluated as part of the proposed action:

- early transfer disposal—transfer before environmental remediation is completed
- traditional disposal—transfer property using traditional disposal mechanisms
- caretaker status—secure property and continue environmental remediation
- no action—continue the mission as prior to November 2005

For the secondary action of property reuse, a range of reuse scenarios that provide the boundaries for the intensity of reuse envisioned in the UMCD Redevelopment Plan were used to evaluate the potential impacts associated with redevelopment of UMCD.

Inclusion of the no action alternative is prescribed by the CEQ regulations implementing NEPA and serves as a benchmark against which federal actions can be evaluated. Accordingly, the no action alternative is evaluated in this EA as a baseline for comparing the effects of the disposal and reuse alternative on the environment.

Factors Considered in Determining that No Environmental Impact Statement is Required

The numerous factors considered in determining that no Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required are provided in detail in the EA, which is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI). The EA examined potential effects of the proposed action and alternatives on resource areas of environmental and socioeconomic concern including land use, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances.

In general, implementation of the disposal and reuse actions would potentially result in minor adverse effects on all resource areas evaluated. Minor-to-moderate, adverse impacts would occur on biological resources and cultural resources. Regarding cultural resources, mitigation requirements are specified in the Programmatic Agreement (PA) for compliance with Section

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106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Minor-to-moderate, beneficial effects are also anticipated for socioeconomics, transportation, utilities, hazardous and toxic substances, and aesthetics and visual resources. Establishment of a habitat conservation area on the Wildlife Refuge parcel for the preservation of bitterbrush shrub-steppe habitat would reduce some adverse environmental effects on biological resources. The UMCD Redevelopment Plan proposes the establishment of a 5,700-acre Wildlife Refuge parcel for the preservation of bitterbrush shrub-steppe habitat.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are required to reduce impacts on cultural resources below levels of significance.

The Army in consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and other consulting parties determined that the proposed action (closure, disposal, and reuse) would have adverse effects on UMCD historic properties and entered into a PA, which identifies specific measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate these adverse effects. The consulting parties agreed that adverse effects on historic properties would not be significant, provided that the mitigation measures in the PA (see the EA, Appendix B) are implemented as part of the proposed action.

The PA requires the Army to comply with notification, reporting, and consulting requirements and (subject to availability of funding) to accomplish the following:

- i. Consistent with the NHPA and PA, complete an architectural inventory and a Properties of Religious and Cultural Significance survey for the entire installation, and conduct an archaeological survey on the parcels that are leaving federal control.
- ii. For archaeological sites that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) to be transferred out of federal control, consult with the Oregon SHPO and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) to determine treatment measures. For NRHP-eligible Properties of Religious and Cultural Significance to be transferred out of federal control, consult with the CTUIR and the Oregon SHPO to determine appropriate treatment measures. For NRHP-eligible aboveground historic properties, mitigation will be conducted in accordance with the terms of the PA.

Other than adherence to the mitigation terms specified in the PA for the protection of cultural resources, no additional mitigation is required of the Army to reduce or avoid effects of the proposed action or any of the alternatives below levels of significance.

The EA outlines a number of mitigation measures that may be applied by other entities as part of redevelopment of the property to reduce adverse effects identified by this environmental analysis, such as implementation of aquifer recharge projects to reduce impacts to the groundwater. A list of these mitigation measures are summarized in Section 4.15 of the EA.

Public Comment

All interested parties were invited to review and comment on this FNSI within 30 days of publication of the Notice of Availability in the *East Oregonian*. Interested parties with comments

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or questions about this action, or who wanted to request a copy of the EA and Draft FNSI for review, were invited to contact Michele Lanigan, BRAC Office, Umatilla Chemical Depot, 78798 Ordnance Road, Building 32, Hermiston, OR 97838-9544 or by email at michele.m.lanigan.civ@mail.mil.

During the public comment period, the EA and Draft FNSI were available to the public via the Internet at http://www.hqda.pentagon.mil/acsimweb/brac/public_reviews.html. Hard copies of the full EA with all appendices, along with the Draft FNSI, were also available in the following libraries: Boardman City Library, 200 South Main Street, Boardman, OR 97818; Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Avenue, Hermiston, OR 97838; Heppner Public Library, 444 North Main Street, Heppner, OR 97836; Umatilla Public Library, 700 6th Street, P.O. Box 820, Umatilla, OR 97882.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the EA and after careful review of the potential impacts, I conclude that implementation of the proposed action or any of the alternatives would not result in a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact on the quality of the natural or human environment. Furthermore, beyond the required measures specified in the PA, no additional mitigation is required to reduce any environmental effects to below significant levels. Redevelopment of UMCD surplus property would result in manageable adverse effects and beneficial effects related to the socioeconomic and environmental resource areas. Preparation of an EIS is not required, and preparation of a FNSI is appropriate.

I have also concluded that the no action alternative would not support Congressional requirements under the BRAC law (Pub. L. 101-510 and 107-107); consequently, it has not been selected for implementation.

Department of the Army
Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (DAIM-ODB)

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DATE